Evaluation Proposal: Leadership Studies Program

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Leadership Studies Program Evaluation

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2018), data released for 2017 shows approximately 12.8 million children under the age of 18 were considered to be living in poverty. Additionally, for the first time in recent history a majority of U.S. school children come from low-income families. Although poverty is a nationwide epidemic, Mississippi has the highest rate (71%) of economically disadvantaged K-12 students in the nation equaling almost three out of four students living at or below the national poverty level (Southern Education Foundation, 2015). The Rural School and Community Trust (2014) reported that over 65 percent of Mississippi's rural students are economically disadvantaged which is substantially higher than the national average of 47 percent. The impact of poverty has major consequences for families, especially children. Economically disadvantaged children often disconnect from society, wrestle with feelings of powerlessness, and display resentment to adults due to what they view as society's inability to help them during their time of need (ChildFund International, 2013). This group of children experiences higher dropout rates. Moreover, for those that do graduate from high school and even fewer amount will attend college. Additionally, living in poverty can decrease the likelihood that a child will be positively engaged in their community once becoming an adult (Office of Adolescent Health, n.d.). Society must work to help these vulnerable children by increasing their opportunity to lead fulfilling and productive lives in addition to helping them develop the necessary skills to be leaders in their communities.

Importance of Leadership Skills

Every year many economically and disadvantaged youth in Mississippi begin their futures without the sufficient tools to become successful in life. Youth who participate in programs that develop leadership skills acquire abilities considered to be instrumental in future

success such as goalsetting, planning, self-assessment, and self-advocacy. Furthermore, leadership skills have been proven to increase student achievement and reduce dropout rates in teens (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Unfortunately, our current national education system does not regard leadership programs as having the same educational value or merit as academic course areas. This, in addition to the inability to fund these types of programs at the state level due to limited education budgets, results in the need for a supplemental program to be available to students.

Leadership Studies Program Grant

For over 40 years, The Frances A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies at The University of Southern Mississippi has provided a variety of programs for K-12 students from across the state of Mississippi and throughout the Southeast. One of the most successful programs is the Leadership Studies Program which is offered as a residential summer program. Scores of successful business and community leaders from Mississippi and around the country have previously participated in this program with many receiving financial support from the Center to attend. However, in the past five years requests for financial assistance for students enrolling in the residential summer leadership program have increased exponentially. Unfortunately due to budgetary restraints and limited donor contributions, only a set number of economically disadvantaged students can be given assistance to participate in this program each summer. This emphasized a need for expanding the format in which the program was offered to increase availability to some of the most vulnerable students particularly economically disadvantaged and/or rural students in grades 9-11 in Mississippi.

In the fall of 2018, a (fictional) grant was awarded by CICF Foundation to fund an online version of the current Leadership Studies Program with the development starting in the spring of

2019, initial implementation in the fall of 2019, and full operations across the state in fall of 2020. As part of CICF grant requirements, both a summary and an evaluation of the first full year of the project are due to the CICF Foundation prior to the end of the 2021 calendar year. CICF Foundation did not provide specific requirements or components for the evaluation of the program.

The goals for this grant were to (1) develop and implement an online version of our Leadership Studies Program specifically targeting a vulnerable population (i.e. economically disadvantaged students in grades 9-11 in the state of Mississippi) within the designated nine different economic regions of the state, (2) enroll at least 150 participants during the first full year of implementation, and (3) develop and implement a media campaign promoting the program. Activities listed below in Table 1 note how the goals were addressed in the grant proposal and the implementation process.

Table 1

Leadership Studies Program Grant Activities

Activity	**Responsible Party**	**Time Frame- Calendar Year Jan-Dec**
Create outline of curriculum for online program	Office Assistant	Jan 2019
Develop online program (e.g. system design, data elements, registration portal, etc.)	I. T. Consulting Firm	Feb-Mar 2019 (6-8 weeks expected)
Determine additional program needs and database development	Program Director	Mar 2019 (ongoing)
Train staff on new program	I. T. Consulting Firm	Mar 2019
Create & maintain social media platform	Volunteers/office staff	Jan 2019 (ongoing)
Establish with media outlet the release dates of public service announcements	Volunteers/office staff	Feb2019
Contact schools & community leaders within the 9 regions of state	Program Director	Feb 2019
Open enrollment to students for new online program	Program Director	Apr 2019
Monitor enrollment of program	Office Assistant	Apr 2019 (ongoing)

Program Evaluation

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation as outlined in the grant is to evaluate the project's success and measure the overall impact of the program on the targeted population. There are several goals of this evaluation which include (1) providing stakeholders with valuable information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the initial project, (2) identifying areas of improvement, and (3) determining if the program is having the intended impact on the targeted population resulting in a benefit to the participants, schools, communities, and future employers. The evaluation team consists of one member of the program development team (i.e. internal) as primary evaluator for their familiarity with the program, two faculty members for their knowledge of implementing and teaching online programs (i.e. external) as well as one site school personnel member for knowledge of site implementation process and extensive knowledge of targeted population. The intended role of the evaluators will be that of value-neutral as to maintain overall objectivity throughout the process.

Formative and Summative Components

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods will be utilized as a part of formative and summative aspects within this evaluation. Formative data collection will be ongoing while summative data, used to assess the achievement of outcomes, will be provided in the form of a detailed report to the CICF Foundation at the end of the evaluation. In addition, brief presentations of these summative results will be conducted at (1) USM for program staff/personnel and (2) each of the designated regions (where applicable) for interested site school staff, participants, parents, community members, and business leaders. Qualitative data will be collected from (a) focus groups, (b) telephone interviews, (c) questionnaires, (d)

observations, (e) samples of work, (f) program documents, (g) checklists, and (h) program documents. While quantitative data collection will include (a) program comparisons, (b) questionnaires, and (c) program documents.

Evaluation Approaches

The evaluation approaches that will be combined for this evaluation include (1) consumer-oriented, (2) decision-oriented, (3) program-oriented, and (4) participant-oriented. First, consumer-oriented will be used as it judges the quality of the program and establishes its value to stakeholders while being transparent and providing information to better inform the public. Next, a decision-oriented approach will seek input from stakeholders in the development of key processes (i.e. data collection methods, information needed), as well as provide information essential to program accountability. Additionally, a program-oriented approach will be used to focus on the original objectives of the grant project and to assess if any discrepancies exist. Last, a participant-oriented approach will be utilized for the components of involving and empowering the stakeholders along with gathering evidence in various ways to establish the credibility of results.

Evaluation Questions

Questions that will be guiding this evaluation are as follows:

1) In what ways is the online leadership program effectively meeting the needs of the targeted distance learners? How is it not meeting student needs?

2) How does the online leadership program that was developed functionally compare to a similar program?

3) What are the characteristics of students enrolled in the first year?

4) How has student enrollment in the program been impacted by the media campaign implemented to promote the program?

5) What barriers are there to student participation and completion of the program?

6) Has the goal of establishing locations in each of the nine economic regions within the state been achieved, if not what barriers exist to meeting this goal?

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders in this evaluation include the CICF Foundation, program staff/personnel, participants, parents, school administrators/personnel, community leaders, and business leaders will be included in the dialogue related to all areas of the evaluation by addressing their needs which will encourage buy-in. Members of the evaluation team will collaborate with these groups together when possible, but due to the size and logistics, separate discussions will be used when needed. Every effort will be made to develop a consensus approach through negotiating and compromising with these groups on key components of the evaluation process. Collaboration with stakeholders will be utilized to gather perspectives on the types of data collection methods (i.e. survey, interviews) to incorporate in the evaluation with the expectation of establishing the types of information needed that will best answer each evaluation question. Additionally, discussions will include implications of the designs selected for the evaluation (i.e. benefits, limitations).

Stakeholders will be involved throughout the process utilizing communication with the evaluation team by both email and phone. All information gathered from stakeholders will be included in the documentation process and kept confidential. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, stakeholders will be provided information related to evaluation findings, limitations, and

conclusions. At this time, stakeholders will also be provided both short term and long-term goals related to the program.

Informed consent

Because this evaluation involves children under the age of 18, parental consent would need to be obtained in order for program participants to participate in the evaluation process. In addition, ethical guidelines including IRB approval for evaluation studies which include vulnerable populations require the evaluation team to seek approval prior to conducting this evaluation. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants including children are a major priority for evaluators.

A consent statement explaining the evaluation, who is conducting the evaluation, why it is being conducted, and any other important pieces of information will be provided to all stakeholders. Program participants and their parents will be given the opportunity to participate or not with the understanding that no negative consequences will result from either their school or program staff if they participate or not in the study. Privacy and confidentiality regarding the participant and their information are detailed in the information provided to participants regarding how the information will be stored on a secure, password-protected computer and any files will be stored in a locked and secure location only accessible by members of the evaluation team. Raw data collected will be maintained for the time required by IRB approval and destroyed (shredded) appropriately after that time period. Computer files will also be deleted at this time. Participants' anonymity will be assured as each will be identified in the evaluation by nonspecific identifiers with randomly assigned numbers to identifying each participant. Any program participant who does not provide parental consent will not be included in the evaluation and no data will be collected.

Design Description

This evaluation is a mixed-method design utilizing both existing and original forms of data. It will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques in addition to also being a cross-sectional, descriptive design since the evaluation questions are descriptive in nature. Quantitative data, which can provide statistical and trend data, is collected from a larger group of participants while the qualitative data, which reflects participant perspectives and experiences, is obtained from a smaller sample of the participants as well as some stakeholders. Stufflebeam's (2004) evaluation design checklist was utilized as a guide in designing the overall evaluation. In addition, as this evaluation has an abundance of qualitative methods Patton's (2003) qualitative evaluation checklist was utilized as a guide for designing, conducting, reporting, and analyzing all qualitative components. Data will be collected as determined by each evaluation question (EQ) and then be used to answer each of the six evaluation questions. The following section addresses each evaluation question separately regarding (a) data source, data collection methods, and participants; (b) instruments, administrative procedures, and timeframe for implementation; and (c) data analysis and expected results.

EQ1: In what ways is the online leadership program effectively meeting the needs of the targeted distance learners? How is it not meeting student needs?

Data source, collection methods, and participants. Evaluation question one is tied to grant project goal 1 which focused on the development and implementation of the program to positively impact the targeted population (i.e. economically disadvantaged students in grades 9-11 in the state of Mississippi). Formative information will be collected from both existing and original data and will be used to answer evaluation question one.

Qualitative data will be collected in focus groups from some program participants and their parents as well as school personnel, community and business leaders. These focus groups will allow the evaluation team to act as a facilitator by asking questions while listening attentively to responses in a group setting with a variety of stakeholders. One of the goals of the focus groups is to help establish components that need to be addressed in the questionnaire. Other goals are to gather in-depth responses regarding how the program is or is not meeting student needs and to start establishing the strengths and weaknesses of the current program. Two different focus group sessions will be conducted with each expected to last approximately one hour. Group participants will be selected through purposive sampling. Each session will consist of six to ten individuals in primarily heterogeneous groupings with one group comprised of program participants and their parents as well as one group comprised of school personnel (i.e. teachers, counselors, administrators). The format will be open-ended questions with the aim of acquiring knowledge of how the program is impacting the lives of participants and preparing them for future roles in life as leaders both in the workforce and their community. These focus group sessions will be conducted in different regions of the state and each will be tape-recorded for transcribing at a later time.

Next, additional qualitative data will be collected via telephone interviews with (a) program participants and (b) community and/or business leaders because information can be gathered quickly using telephone interviews and is relatively inexpensive. Evaluation team members will be trained on the protocol of conducting telephone interviews and will be pre-contacting participants to schedule dates and times for the interviews as well as providing them with information regarding the evaluation and aim of the interview. Interview participants are selected via purposive sampling resulting in approximately five individuals from each group.

Interviews will be brief lasting approximately 20-30 minutes. The goal is to obtain participant perspectives about their experiences with the program, impacts from the program, and areas of improvement for the program. Interviews of business and community leaders will center how components of the leadership program can benefit the targeted population now, and in the future along with other leadership skill areas that can be incorporated to strengthen the program for students.

In addition to interviews and focus groups, qualitative samples of students' work (community action plan) will be randomly selected from the online program assignment section for evaluators to review their overall growth throughout the program. The leadership program is designed to create a knowledge of the fundamentals of leadership such as enhancing problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, and decision-making skills in students. These skills are developed through course activities and culminate in the planning, developing, and implementation of a community action plan created by the student based on a need they see in their communities. Reviewing the action plan of participants will provide additional descriptive information on the effectiveness and impact of the program on the targeted population. Evaluators will review a total of 10-15 action plans.

Lastly, a quasi-experimental design will be utilized quantitative collection methods to examine the effectiveness of the program on the targeted population for the grant period. The evaluation team will utilize purposeful nonprobability sampling and G Power software will be utilized to help determine the total sample size needed. Groups will be determined by enrollment status with students who previously completed program (i.e. treatment group) and students who are enrolled but have not started program (i.e. control group). Participants will be matched by gender, ethnicity, and grade for comparison groups. Both groups will be emailed a link to

Qualtrics to complete a questionnaire that consists of 25 questions of a 5 item Likert scale with options ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*. The questionnaire will measure participants' attitudes about the importance of leadership skills. Furthermore, data collection will utilize a post-test only nonequivalent group design as enrollment data is expected to show various inconsistencies and baseline data is not collected. Although baseline data and covariates will be not assessed, future evaluations could improve this design by incorporating these if it is determined necessary.

Instruments, administrative procedures, and implementation timeframe. The implementation process is exploratory sequential as the evaluation team will collect qualitative data (i.e. focus groups, interviews, samples of work) and analyze it, then that information will be used to develop the quantitative questionnaire. Once the questionnaire has been developed and administered to both the treatment and control groups, analyses will be conducted. Data from both qualitative and quantitative collection methods will be integrated and analyzed to help determine the overall effectiveness of the program at meeting the needs of students.

The timeframe for the overall process aligns with a typical school year calendar. Since schools are the site locations for most participants, they can only be expected to access the program from these locations when the school is open (Aug-May) each year. With that in mind, the program contains 10 lessons lasting approximately 10 weeks (i.e. 1 lesson per week). The timeframe for these activities includes focus groups being conducted at the end of September 2020, telephone interviews being conducted at the end of September or beginning of October 2020, and the review of student work and questionnaires being conducted mid-October 2020.

Data analysis and expected results. The inductive analysis will consist of transcribed and coding data, then determining themes, and determine substantive significance for findings

and conclusions. The deductive analysis will consist of conducting a one-way between-subjects ANOVA to determine if attending the leadership program had a statistically significant effect on participants' attitudes. Groups will consist of participants who are enrolled but not completed the leadership program (i.e. control) and participants who have the completed leadership program (i.e. treatment). The expected results after a review of all data analyzed are that there will be a statistically significant difference between the groups. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data will help to provide validity resulting in the evaluators being more confident in their conclusions. Prior to beginning the evaluation, the evaluators will purchase a new subscription to SPSS Statistics software in order to provide stakeholders with plots, tables, and graphs that display this data (hint, hint).

EQ2: How does the online leadership program that was developed functionally compare to a similar program?

Data source, collection methods, and participants. Evaluation question two is also tied to grant project goal 1 which focused on the development and implementation of the program. Data collected will be original as part of the comparative analysis as this question specifically relates to the comparison of the Leadership Studies Program to a similar program. In order to collect the necessary data, **t**he two external evaluators will assess both the Leadership Studies Program and a similar program, Arizona Virtual Academy Leadership Course, which is an established online course that is offered to students in the 10^{th} and 11^{th} grades across Arizona. This comparable program utilizes Title I funds to provide a supplemental leadership program to students who are struggling in a variety of areas in school (i.e. discipline, attendance, grades). Both programs contain 10-12 lessons and are offered online for students to work at their own pace outside of their typical academic schedule. Both programs first require parental enrollment

then program and curriculum materials are sent to students. One notable difference is Arizona Virtual Academy loans students a computer and printer while the Leadership Studies Program requires students to have a computer or to utilize one of the resource sites located at a participating school or public library.

Evaluators will assess both programs using a program evaluation checklist developed for use in this evaluation which correlates with the five sections contained in the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online K12 Courses rubric. This new checklist will use a 5-point rating scale of *0=Absent-component is missing, 1=Unsatisfactory-needs significant improvement, 2=Somewhat satisfactory-needs targeted improvements, 3=Satisfactory-minor improvement needed, 4=Very satisfactory- no improvement needed*. Evaluators also have a comments section to further address/explain the strengths and weaknesses of the programs. Examples from the checklist are provided below in Table 2.

The checklist will contain five sections as outlined by iNACOL with 4-5 questions in each section. The checklist should take approximately 30 minutes to complete for each program. This method of collecting data is relatively inexpensive and less time consuming than other methods (i.e. focus groups, interviews) and is ideal for providing stakeholders with essential information to strengthen their program. In addition, each evaluator will observe three students participating in two different lessons of the online programs. This will allow a different perspective of the program's functionality. Evaluators will not have the identities of students that are observing as program staff will use systematic sampling to select participants to observe. Observations will take approximately one hour each. Observations will be used as a quality check of program implementation and design. The qualitative observation checklist will focus on

key elements of the program and its usability providing perspectives of strengths and weaknesses of these areas.

Table 2

Example of Program Evaluation Checklist Components

Sections	To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Evaluator Considerations	Rating
Course Content	Multiple learning resources and materials are accessible to increase student success before course begins	Textbooks, instructional materials, browser plugins are accessible to student; additional materials and tutorials are available to help student be successful	3
Instructional Design	Design of course displays a clear understanding of students' needs; a variety of styles of learning are incorporated into curriculum	Instructional and assessment techniques, materials used throughout course allows students to demonstrate achievement of program goals and objectives	4
Student Assessment	Grading rubrics are provided to instructor and are shared with student	Grading policy and rationale of expectations are provided for each assignment	3
Technology	Clear and consistent navigation present throughout course	Students can maneuver through course independently; graphics help guide student through lessons; minimal training is needed to navigate course	2
Course evaluation	Course is evaluated for effectiveness and delivery; options for component enhancements are provided	Combination of student, instructor, expert, and designer review was to make course more effective in meeting student needs	4

Instruments, administrative procedures, and implementation timeframe. There are two instruments consisting of the program evaluation checklist and the observation checklist which will both be developed by the evaluation team with input from stakeholders and national standards. In order to conduct the document review, the evaluators will have access to reviewing both online programs in order to complete each program evaluation checklist. Observations will be conducted to help triangulate findings and provide an understanding of the overall program and make suggestions for areas of improvement. As a result, a convergent parallel design will be utilized to gather qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, merge both results, and interpret these results. Consents needed will be obtained to be observed prior to observations be

conducted. The timeframe for conducting these activities will be August to September 2020 for program comparison and Mid-September 2020 for observations.

Data analysis and expected results. A comparative analysis of quantitative data will be conducted seeking to determine similar qualities and features of the programs as well as establishing the Leadership Studies Program overall functionality for online learners. The deductive analysis will consist of conducting a *t*-test to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two programs as it relates to each of the five sections reflected in the checklist. The inductive analysis will include summarizing information from observations and looking for themes or patterns and determining substantive significance for findings and conclusions. Interpretations will be made using data from both the comparative analysis and observations regarding how effective the program is at meeting student needs or not. The expected results are that there will not be a statistically significant difference between the programs as shown in Table 3 and Table 4. This will reflect that the two programs (i.e. one new, one established) are more similar than different in overall functionality and that the online program meets the expectations of national standards for K12 online courses.

Table 3

Graph of Program Comparison Components

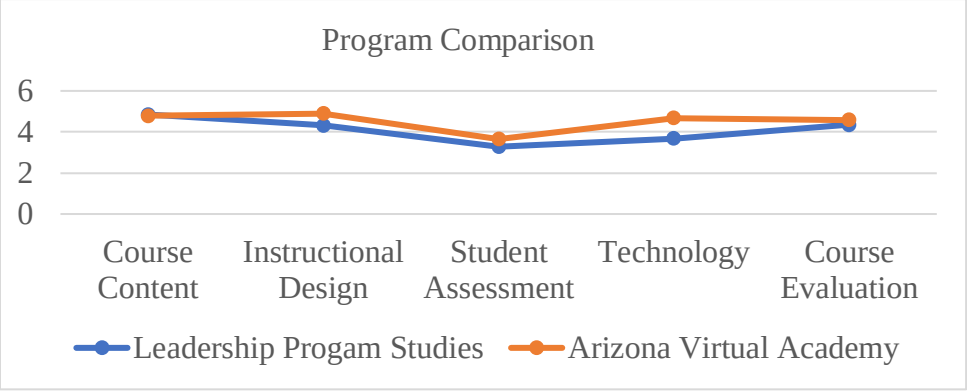


Table 4

Expected results of Program Comparison

Programs	Sections	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership Studies Program	Course Content	4.85	1.19
	Instructional Design	4.32	1.12
	Student Assessment	3.28	0.87
	Technology	3.67	0.96
	Course evaluation	4.35	1.13
Arizona Virtual Academy	Course Content	4.78	1.17
	Instructional Design	4.89	1.20
	Student Assessment	3.65	0.95
	Technology	4.67	1.16
	Course evaluation	4.58	1.15

EQ3: What are the characteristics of students enrolled in the first year?

Data source, collection methods, and participants. Evaluation question three is tied to grant project goal 3 which focused on the program enrollment. Quantitative data collected to answer this question will be existing descriptive demographic information that has been obtained from participants and/or parents as part of the enrollment process. All students who have completed and/or registered to participate in the program will be included in the analysis. The evaluation team will determine a procedure for missing data prior to inputting information into the computer system.

Instruments, administrative procedures, and implementation timeframe. There is no instrument needed for these activities. Categorical data from program enrollment documents will be examined by the evaluator for participants' (1) gender/sex, (2) ethnicity, and (3) grade level. Collecting and inputting this descriptive data will take approximately two to three hours total and can be completed by one member of the evaluation team. Implementation timeframe for collecting data will be ongoing from August to December 2020 with analyses being conducted in January 2021.

Data analysis and expected results. A quantitative analysis process will include creating a frequency distribution because the descriptive data is categorical (i.e. characteristics of participants). The analysis will require the development of graphs and tables to visually represent enrollment data related to ethnicity, gender, and grade levels for ease of interpretation by stakeholders (See Figure 1).

The expected results are that there is a higher rate of males in the program than females (See Table 5). In addition, there appears to be more American Indian and African American students enrolled than Hispanic or (Caucasian) White students. Furthermore, data analysis shows that 49% of participants are in the 10^{th} grade when they enroll in the program (See Table 6). These analyses show areas where improvement is needed as it relates to enrollment. Program staff can utilize this information to help increase enrollment in those groups underrepresented in the first year of the program and continue to target those groups who have been highly responsive to recruiting efforts that were initially implemented.

Table 5

Enrollment Characteristics by Gender

Gender Totals	**Frequency**	**Relative Percent**
Female	53	30.7%
Male	120	69.3%

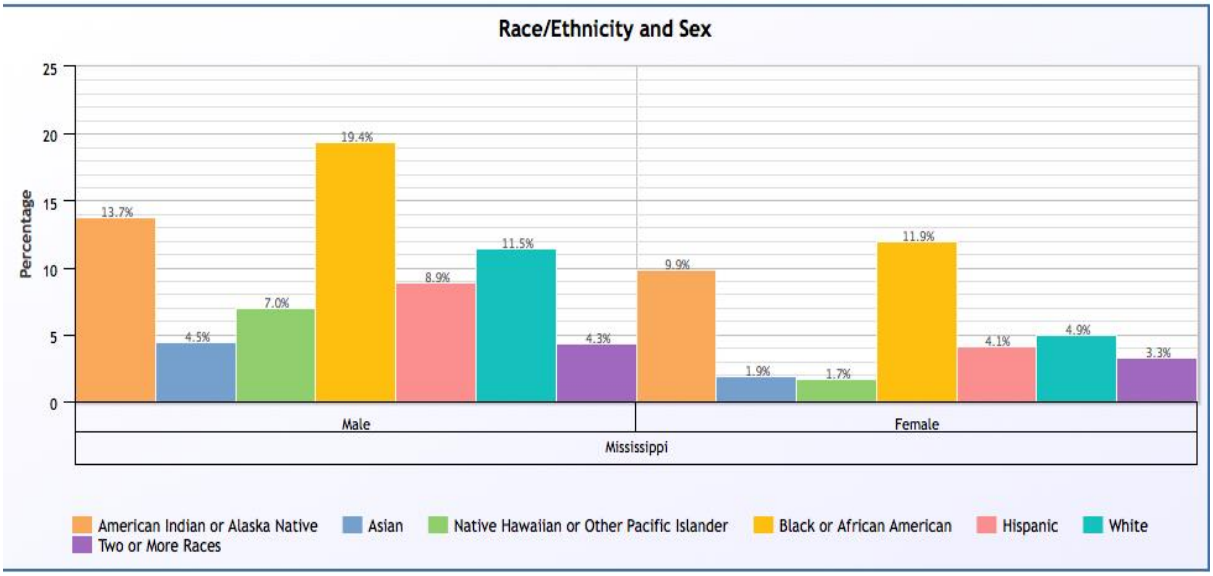
Table 6

Enrollment Characteristics by Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Relative Percent
9th	38	21.9%
10th	85	49.2%
11th	50	28.9%

Figure 1

Participant Characteristics by Gender and Ethnicity



EQ4: How has student enrollment in the program been impacted by the media campaign implemented to promote the program?

Data source, collection methods, and participants. Evaluation question four is tied to grant project goal 2 which focused on developing and implementing a media campaign to promote the program. Data collected to answer this question will be both existing and original information. Existing information will include documents regarding the implementation process

of the media campaign for qualitative analysis. The expectation for the evaluation team to conduct a qualitative document review using an implementation checklist to understand the steps taken to (1) create and maintain a social media platform and (2) establish a connection with media outlets, and (3) determine release dates for announcements promoting the program.

Enrollment data obtained for evaluation question two will also be utilized to examine how parents or students hear about the program. One question in the enrollment application asks parents if they learned about the program on either (a) television, (b) radio, or (c) internet to include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Karnes Center website, or a school website. This data will be collected on all participants who have enrolled in the program for quantitative analysis of which type of media was more effective in recruiting participants for the Leadership Studies Program. Data collected to answer this question will be existing descriptive information that has been obtained from participants and/or parents as part of the enrollment process. All students who have completed and/or registered to participate in the program will be included in the analysis. The evaluation team will determine a procedure for missing data prior to inputting information into the computer system.

Instruments, administrative procedures, and implementation timeframe. The instrument that will be developed for collecting data this evaluation question is the implementation checklist. This qualitative checklist will be used as a quality check on the implementation of the media campaign designed to inform and recruit participants for the program. Enrollment data from participant applications will be reviewed to obtain quantitative data related to how participants learned about the program specifically the form of media (i.e. t.v., radio, internet). A convergent parallel design will be utilized to gather qualitative (i.e. checklist) and quantitative (i.e. enrollment) data simultaneously, merge both results and interpret

these results to gain a better understanding of the implementation process of the media campaign used to promote the program to the targeted population. A review of media campaign documents will take approximately one hour.

The timeframe for conducting the document review and completing the implementation checklist will be conducted mid-September 2020. The timeframe for collecting enrollment data coincides with data being collected from participant enrollment applications for EQ3. Collecting and inputting this descriptive data will take approximately one-hour total and it be completed by the same member of the evaluation team collecting enrollment data for EQ3. Therefore, the implementation timeframe for collecting data will also be ongoing from August to December 2020 with analyses being conducted in January 2021.

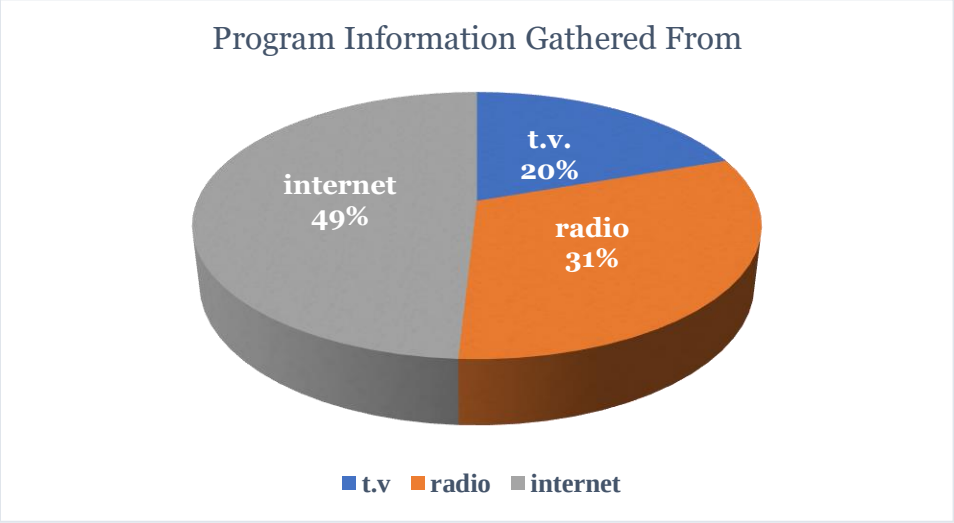
Data analysis and expected results. The analysis process will include analyzing data from the document review, which will utilize the implementation checklist, and the enrollment data and merging findings. The key focus of the analysis of qualitative data is to determine if there are areas which need additional attention in recruiting participants (i.e. stronger social media presence, more radio ads) while the focus of the quantitative analysis is to examine the frequency of types of media (i.e. categorical variable) used to recruit participants. The quantitative component of enrollment data will be graphically represented as research has shown that a pie chart is an effective method of summarizing categorical data and since the stakeholders include a wide variety of ages and skill levels, for this reason, this method was selected.

The expectation after review of all data analyzed is that there will be a difference between the groups. The expected results indicate that almost half (49%) of participants selected the internet, 31% selected radio, and 20% selected television as where they learned about the program (See Figure 2). Future evaluations may consider dividing up the internet group to help

identify where media attention should focus more efforts. Future efforts could examine by regions of the state for a more defined analysis.

Figure 2

Types of Media



EQ5: What barriers are there to student participation and completion of the program?

Data source, collection methods, and participants. Evaluation question five is tied to grant project goal 3 which focused on the program enrollment. Original qualitative data will be collected from focus groups for some program participants and their parents who (a) started the program but did not complete, (b) enrolled but dropped out before beginning the program, and (c) who requested information on the program but did not enroll. One focus group session will be conducted and is expected to last approximately one hour. Group participants will be selected through purposive sampling and will consist of six to ten individuals. The format will be open-ended questions and the session will be tape-recorded for transcribing at a later time. The goal of the focus group is to gather in-depth responses regarding barriers to program enrollment or participation of students in the targeted population. Student enrollment and participation are

crucial because the primary goal of the grant is to help this vulnerable population of students to be better prepared for their future.

Next, original qualitative data will be collected via telephone interviews with program staff and school personnel. (See Appendix A). Once again, evaluation team members will be pre-contacting participants to schedule dates and times for the interviews as well as providing them with information regarding the evaluation and aim of the interview. Interview participants are selected via purposive sampling resulting in approximately three to five individuals from each group. Interviews will be brief lasting approximately 20-30 minutes. The goal of interviewing program staff is to obtain perspectives and understanding regarding issues related to program enrollment, recruitment, and participation. Interviews of school personnel will focus on identifying ways to increase both enrollment in the program and ways to help students to be successful at completing the program once they decide to enroll in the program.

Instruments, administrative procedures, and implementation timeframe. There are no instruments used to answer this evaluation question. Evaluators will collect qualitative data from both focus groups and telephone interviews. Program participants will be asked open-ended questions to order to share their experiences with the program. Questions center on obtaining an understanding of why students dropped out or did not attend after enrolling. Are there factors that are influencing participation levels such as transportation, assignment expectations, or comprehension issues? This qualitative information will be used to help improve the program and enrollment/completion rates. Telephone interviews will have a similar purpose as focus groups but utilizing school personnel and program staff to help identify barriers in students successfully completing the course. The aim is to better understand if site locations are effective

and if the program is adding undue burden on the targeted population. Timeline for conducting both the focus groups and telephone interviews is from January to February 2021.

Data analysis and expected results. The inductive analysis will consist of transcribed and coding data, then determining themes, determine substantive significance for findings and conclusions. Both focus group data and interview data will be analyzed for suggestions for improving the program going forward and ways to better serve the student population. Expected results after a review of the qualitative data are that students who are not completing the program may be lacking either parental support or the realization that leadership skills development is as essential to their future success as language and mathematical skills. The knowledge gathered from this focus group could provide the most information within the entire evaluation about how to increase the footprint of the program across the state particularly in communities with the greatest economic challenges. Addressing the barriers of participation and/or completion of the program within this group of participants is essential if the program is to survive long term and to have the impact outlined in the grant.

EQ6: Has the goal of establishing locations in each of the nine economic regions within the state been achieved, if not what barriers exist to meeting this goal?

Data source, collection methods, and participants. Evaluation question six is also tied to grant project goal 1 which focused on the development and implementation of the program. Data collected to answer this question will be both existing and original information. Existing information will include the review of documents regarding the implementation process of site locations across the state of Mississippi for both qualitative and quantitative analyses. According to The Mississippi Economic Review (2017) published by the University Research Center Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, the state can be divided into nine economic regions.

These regions are frequently utilized as a method for examining substrates of the state within an educational context. To answer this evaluation question, the evaluation team will conduct a document review to (1) understand the steps taken to establish site locations in various school districts within each of the nine regions and (2) calculate the number of site locations, and (3) determine what regions, if any, do not have site locations currently.

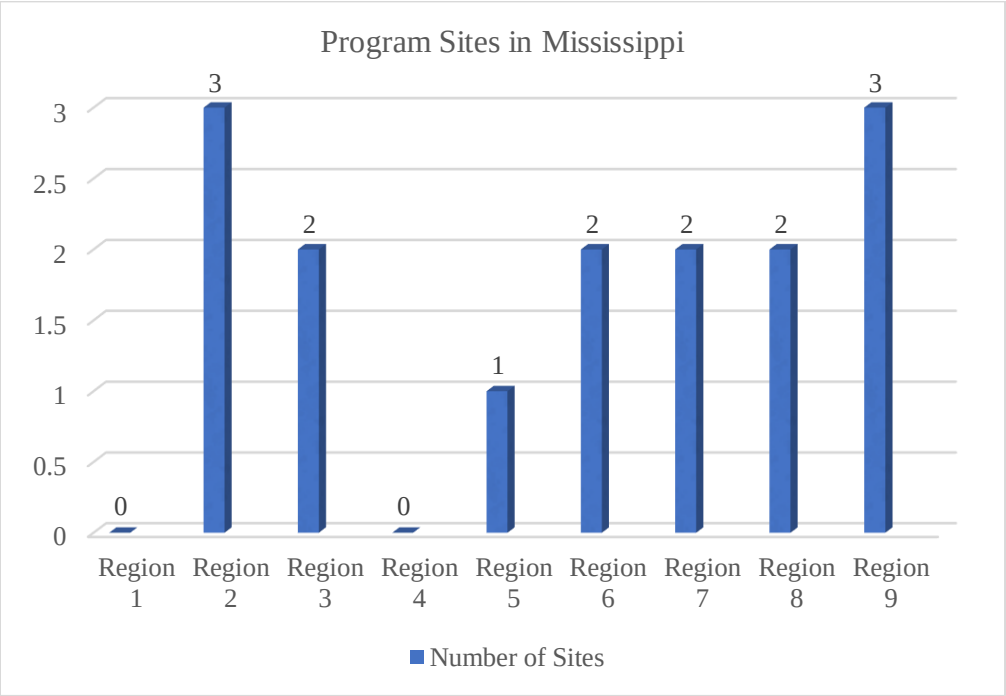
Next, additional qualitative data will be collected via telephone interviews of program staff. Evaluation team members will be pre-contacting participants to schedule dates and times for the interviews. Interview participants are selected via purposive sampling totaling approximately three to five individuals. Interviews will be brief lasting approximately 20-30 minutes. The goal of interviewing program staff is to obtain perspectives and understanding regarding issues related to program implementation process and issues with site locations being established.

Instruments, administrative procedures, and implementation timeframe. There are no instruments used to answer this evaluation question. The document review will focus on the implementation process of the site locations around the state for use by students without access to a home computer as well as determining the number of locations for each region. Telephone interviews will focus on gathering additional knowledge on how the sites are selected in each of the nine regions as well as examining perceived school support, accessibility for students, and recruitment opportunities as well as learning of additional site considerations for the future. Telephone interviews will be conducted by the external evaluators as to reflect a more unbiased view in the collecting of data. Interview questions will be open-ended with the hopes of identifying areas of improvement in the implementation process. In addition, evaluators will try to determine barriers in the process as two of the nine regions currently have no site locations.

Timeline for conducting both the document review and telephone interviews is February to March 2021.

Figure 3

Program Site Locations by Economic Regions



Data analysis and expected results. The key focus of analyzing the telephone interviews is to determine qualitatively if there are areas that need additional attention in recruiting participants (i.e. stronger social media presence, more radio ads). In addition, determining if there are better ways to partner with schools or other locations such as community centers or libraries in the future. The quantitative component of the document review will be analyzed and a frequency distribution will be created to reflect site locations for each of the nine regions. This data will be represented in a bar graph (See Figure 3), which similar to a pie chart, can be easily interpreted by stakeholders. Qualitative data will be coded and themed in order to report to the stakeholders regarding strengths and weaknesses of the implementation process in addition to areas of improvement. Recommendations will focus on improving community and

school outreach and strengthening relationships with school personnel in regions without site locations. The expected results will indicate that two regions currently have no site locations with the remaining regions having an average of two site locations per region. Results from telephone interviews are expected to show the lack of school staff support (i.e. administrators, office personnel) impact site implementation being successful or not. Additionally, for those same schools' lack of participant interest negative impacts school support for program implementation.

Rationale and Potential Barriers

This evaluation is designed to complement the CICF Foundation's grant for the development and implementation of an online version of the Leadership Studies Program. Goals of the evaluation align with both grant goals and evaluation questions in an effort to provide information to stakeholders regarding both the strengths and weaknesses of the new program, identify future areas of improvement, and ultimately to determine if the program is having the intended impact on the targeted population as outlined in the grant. The collection of both formative and summative data will allow for the evaluation team to accurately assess the program and determine its overall functionality. Stakeholder input throughout the process is crucial to the success of the evaluation. Qualitative methods provide an opportunity for participants and other stakeholders' voices, opinions, and perspectives to be incorporated into the evaluative findings. Furthermore, a variety of quantitative methods utilized in this evaluation will allow for the wide variety of stakeholders to understand evaluation results and conclusions as well as easily display areas for improvement as every member of this group is needed for the program to be successful long term. Potential barriers for this evaluation include:

(1) Possible reliability and validity of the instruments developed for use in the evaluation. As a result of them not having been administered before, there is a possibility of error in the findings.

(2) Socioeconomic and cultural differences could play a role in gaining an accurate understanding and perception from both the focus groups and the interviews.

(3) Attrition of participants due to unforeseen issues that may face children who are considered economically disadvantaged.

(4) The possible bias of including an internal person who was part of the development and implementation team as an evaluator. Personal bias toward or against participants, other program staff members, school personnel, or others may influence this person's evaluative ability to present information gathered during the evaluation process accurately.

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Appendix A

Telephone Interview Protocol

Hi, ____ thank you for agreeing to participate in the evaluation of the online Leadership Studies Program. The purpose of this interview today is to gain your perspective about existing barriers to student participation or completion of the Leadership Studies Program. In doing so, we aim to add school personnel voices to existing information related to program participation issues facing students in your school.

This interview is being recorded for the intent of transcribing for accurately presenting information gathered from you. The transcription will not contain names or identifying markers. After the member check has been completed, the recording will be permanently deleted. Information will be shared with you after the evaluation is complete.

For the following questions please provide your ideas or opinions. Because this is a semi-structured interview, you are encouraged to elaborate on the areas of each question that are meaningful for you.

1. Are you familiar with the Leadership Studies Program?

2. Are you familiar with students who are currently (or have in the past) been enrolled in this program?

3. Have you had parents or students request program or contact information from your school about the online Leadership Studies Program? If so, what is your typical response?

4. Have you at any time had students ask you for assistance with enrollment in the program? If so, what is your typical response?

5. Have you at any time had students ask you for assistance with accessing the program or providing technical assistance either in enrolling or completing any lessons within the curriculum?

6. Are you aware of any complaints about the program from either students or parents? If so, what were the issues that were discussed?

7. Please describe issues you feel are preventing students from participating or completing in the program in general.

8. What supports might mitigate these issues you have described?

9. What *existing* supports do you feel need to be modified?

10. In your opinion, are there benefits to students in your school participating in this program?

11. Have you observed or heard of students who have attended utilizing their new leadership skills to help your school community?

12. Do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding the Leadership Studies Program or its impact (positive or negative) on your students or school?

Thank you again for participating in this interview. Additional questions may be needed for clarification and to confirm the transcription to more accurately represent your beliefs and perspectives. If so, you will be contacted in order to schedule a short follow-up. Thank you again for allowing me to interview you.

Appendix B

Summaries of Evaluation Plan

	Evaluation Question 1	**Evaluation Question 2**	**Evaluation Question 3**
Participant/ Information Source	Participants Parents School personnel Community/business leaders	Program documents Participants	Program enrollment documents
Sampling	Qual: purposive; random; Quant: purposeful nonprobability	Quant: purposive Qual: systematic	All participants enrolled or registered for program
Design	Qual: descriptive Quant: quasi-experimental post-test only	Quant: comparative analysis Qual: descriptive	Quant: Descriptive
Data Collection Methods/ Instrument	Exploratory sequential- Qual: focus grps; telephone interviews; student work Quant: questionnaire	Convergent parallel- Quant: develop program evaluation checklist Qual: observation checklist	Quant: Collect demographic categorical data from enrollment application
Data Collection Procedure	Qual: conduct focus grps; conduct telephone interviews; review student work Quant: send questionnaire via Qualtrics	Quant: select comparable program & complete checklist for both programs Qual: conduct observations & complete checklists for each	Quant: Review data from enrollment applications
Data Analysis	Qual: code & theme all data; Quant: One-way ANOVA	Quant: *t*-test Qual: summarize observations, look for themes	Quant: Frequency distribution- tables and graphs
Timeframe	Focus grps & telephone interviews: end of Sep 2020 Student work: Mid-Oct 2020 Questionnaire: Mid-Oct 2020	Comparative analysis: Aug to Sep 2020 Observations: Mid-Sep 2020	Collecting: (ongoing) Aug to Dec 2020 Analyze: Jan 2021
Audience	CICF Foundation Program staff Participants & parents School personnel Community/business leaders	CICF Foundation Program staff Participants & parents School personnel Community/business leaders	CICF Foundation Program staff Participants & parents School personnel Community/business leaders

Appendix B (Continued)

	Evaluation Question 4	**Evaluation Question 5**	**Evaluation Question 6**
Participant/ Information Source	Program enrollment documents; Media campaign implementation documents	Participants Parents Program staff School personnel	Program implementation documents for site locations; Program staff
Sampling	All documents related to topics	Purposive	All documents related to topic; Purposive
Design	Qual: descriptive Quant: Descriptive	Qual: descriptive	Descriptive
Data Collection Methods/ Instrument	Convergent parallel- Qual: document review, create implementation checklist Quant: Collect demographic categorical data from enrollment application	Qual: focus grps; telephone interviews	Quant: document review; Qual: document review, telephone interviews
Data Collection Procedure	Qual: review media campaign implementation process& complete implementation checklist Quant: review data from enrollment applications	Qual: conduct focus grps; conduct telephone interviews	Quant & Qual: Review site location implementation process, location data; Qual: conduct telephone interviews
Data Analysis	Qual: summarize information, examine findings Quant: Descriptive analysis-pie chart	Qual: code & theme all data	Frequency distribution-bar graph
Timeframe	Qual: Mid-Sep 2020 Quant: Collecting: (ongoing) Aug to Dec 2020 Analyze: Jan 2021	Both: Jan-Feb 2021	Both: Feb-Mar 2021
Audience	CICF Foundation Program staff Participants & parents School personnel Community/business leaders	CICF Foundation Program staff Participants & parents School personnel	CICF Foundation Program staff Participants & parents School personnel Community/business leaders

Appendix C

Evaluation Schedule and Timeframe

Evaluation Components	**Activity Time**	**Number of people/groups**	**Total Time Requirements**	**Timeframe**
EQ1 Focus groups Telephone interviews Review of student work Questionnaire	 1 hr 20-30 mins each 10-15 mins each 1 hr	 2 groups (6 to 10) 2 groups (n=10) 1 group (10 to 15) 2 groups	 2 hrs 5 hrs 2.5 hrs 1 hr	 End of Sep 2020 End of Sep 2020 Mid-Oct 2020 Mid-Oct 2020
EQ2 Comparative analysis Observations	 30 mins each 1 hr each	 2 programs 3 students	 1 hr 6 hrs	 Aug to Sep 2020 Mid-Sep 2020
EQ3 Enrollment document review	 2.5 hrs	 n/a	 2.5 hrs	 Collect Aug-Dec 2020 Analyze: Jan 2021
EQ4 Media campaign document review Enrollment document review	 1 hr 1 hr (part of EQ3)	 n/a n/a	 1 hr 1 hr	 Mid-Sep 2020 Collect Aug-Dec 2020 Analyze: Jan 2021
EQ5 Focus groups Telephone interviews	 1 hr 20-30 mins each	 1 group (6 to 10) 2 groups (n=10)	 1 hr 5 hrs	 Jan-Feb 2021 Jan-Feb 2021
EQ6 Implementation document review Telephone interviews	 1 hr 20-30 mins each	 n/a 1 group (n=5)	 1 hr 2.5 hrs	 Feb-Mar 2021 Feb-Mar 2021
			30.5	